

In the Claims

Please amend Claims 8, 22, and 24, all without prejudice or disclaimer.

1 1. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein each of said
2 outer portions of said first and second lateral sections is secured to one of said third and
3 fourth side edges of said back portion to form a pant-like article having a waist opening,
4 and first and second leg openings.

5 2. Canceled.

6 3. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 1, including an
7 absorbent core attached to at least one of said front portion, said back portion, and said
8 crotch portion.

9 4. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein the
10 attachment of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion comprises at
11 least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, thermally activated bonds, hook and
12 loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, and piercing.

13 5. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein said first and
14 second lateral sections generally overlie said front portion.

15 6. (Previously presented). A personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein the side edges
16 of said first and second lateral sections are aligned in an abutting relationship.

17 7. (Previously presented). A personal care article as in Claim 6 wherein the inner edges
18 are joined together at a line of weakness.

19 8. (Currently amended). A personal care article, having a longitudinal axis, and
20 comprising:

21 (a) a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a
22 second side edge, and a fastener receptive area (56);

1 (b) a first lateral section and a second lateral section, each of the first
2 and second lateral sections having an inner portion, and an outer portion
3 including an outer edge, the outer portion being defined between the
4 fastener receptive area (56) on the front portion and the outer edge of the
5 lateral section, a releasable fastener on the inner portion of the respective
6 lateral section having an inner edge and being releasably fastened to said
7 front portion fastener receptive area closer to the longitudinal axis than to
8 the respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section, the outer
9 portion of each said lateral section being attached at at least one
10 attachment site to said front portion inwardly of, but adjacent, the
11 respective one of said first and second side edges of said front portion, the
12 one or more of said at least one attachment sites on the corresponding
13 outer portion, which are closest to the inner edge of the releasable
14 fastener, being closer to the respective side edge of the front portion than
15 to the inner edge of the releasable fastener;

16 (c) a back portion having a back end, a third side edge and a fourth
17 side edge; and

18 (d) a crotch portion between said front portion and said back portion,
19 and strength of attachment, at said attachment sites, of said outer portions
20 of said first and second lateral sections to said front portion being
21 sufficiently weak such that said attachment~~[[s]]~~ sites can be separated
22 from said front portion to adjust the releasable fastener without
23 substantially fracturing said front portion.

24 9. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein
25 said first and second lateral sections are directly secured to respective

1 ones of said third and fourth side edges of said back portion, without

2 intervening material between said lateral sections and said back portion.

3 10. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 8, including an
4 absorbent core attached to at least one of said front portion, said back portion, and said
5 crotch portion.

6 11. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein the
7 attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections
8 and the front portion comprises at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook
9 and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, piercing, and thermally
10 activated bonding.

11 12. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein said first
12 and second lateral sections generally overlie said front portion.

13 13. (Previously presented). A personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein the inner
14 edges of the first and second lateral sections are aligned in an abutting relationship.

15 14. (Previously presented). A personal care article as in Claim 13 wherein said inner
16 edges are joined together at a line of weakness.

17 15-20. Canceled.

18 21. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein strength of
19 attachment of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections to said front
20 portion is less than strength of the securement of said outer portions of said first and
21 second lateral sections to said back portion, whereby attachment of said outer portions
22 of said first and second lateral sections to said front portion can be separated from said
23 front portion without separating the securement of said first and second lateral sections
24 from the third and fourth side edges of said back portion.

25 22. (Currently amended). A personal care article comprising:

1 a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a second side
2 edge, and a fastener receptive area;

3 a first lateral section and a second lateral section, each of the first and second
4 lateral sections having an inner portion, and an outer portion including an outer edge,
5 the outer portion being defined between the fastener receptive area on the front portion
6 and the outer edge of the lateral section, a releasable fastener on the inner portion of
7 ~~the respective lateral section~~ having an inner edge and being releasably fastened to
8 said front portion closer to a longitudinal axis of the personal care article than to the
9 respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section, the outer portion of each said
10 lateral portion being attached at at least one attachment site to said front portion
11 inwardly of but adjacent the respective one of said first and second side edges of said
12 front portion, the one or more of said at least one attachment sites on the corresponding
13 outer portion closest to the inner edge of the releasable fastener being closer to the
14 respective side edge of the front portion than to the inner edge of the releasable
15 fastener, the first and second lateral sections configured to be stretchable relative to the
16 fastener receptive area with the releasable fastener fastened in the fastener receptive
17 area when the personal care article is worn as a pant;

18 a back portion having a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge; and
19 a crotch portion between said front portion and said back portion, the

20 wherein strength of attachment at said attachment sites of said outer portions of
21 said first and second lateral sections to said front portion ~~being~~ is sufficiently weak such
22 that said attachment sites can be separated from said front portion without fracturing
23 said front portion, the attachment sites when intact configured to stabilize the first and
24 second lateral sections relative to said longitudinal axis to prevent said front portion
25 from folding over on itself, said attachment sites being attached at each lateral portion

1 further configured to stretch away from or toward said longitudinal axis when the
2 personal care article is worn as the pant.

3 23. (Previously presented). The personal care article as in Claim 22, wherein the
4 attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections
5 and the front portion comprises at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook-
6 and-loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, piercing, thermally
7 activated bonding, and combinations thereof.

8 24. (Currently amended). The personal care article as in Claim 23, wherein said first
9 and second lateral sections overlie a portion of the front portion, each of the first and
10 second lateral sections being free from attachment to the front portion between the
11 releasable fastening at the respective inner portion and ~~areas adjacent~~ the first and
12 second side edges of the front portion.